

H E C U B A.

Translated from the GREEK of

E U R I P I D E S,

WITH

A N N O T A T I O N S

Chiefly relating to A N T I Q U I T Y.



L O N D O N:

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M D C C X L I X.

[Price 1s.]

To the Honourable

MISS WEST,

In Veneration of that

AFFABILITY *of* DEPARTMENT

So Essential to, and always Distinguishable in,

TRUE NOBILITY,

This Translation is humbly Inscrib'd by,

M A D A M,

Your most oblig'd,

and most obedient Servant,

T. M.

To the Honorable

MISS W. E. S. J.

In Verification of the

Authenticity of the

So Essential and always Distinguishing in

TRUE NOT LIT

This Translation is hereby

M. A. D. M.

For the purpose of

and not to be

M. T.

A



T O T H E
R E A D E R.



S this Translation was entirely design'd for the use of the *English* Reader, I mean those who understand not the original Language, or such young Gentlemen as are now entring upon the Study of it, it may be necessary to premise a few things relating to the Author, and this Play in particular, by way of Advertisement.

Euripides was born at *Salamis*, or *Phyla*, in *Attica*, in the Seventy-fifth *Olympiad*, about four Hundred and Eighty Years before the Christian *Æra*. It is said, that his Friend *Socrates* assisted

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him in his Compositions, and instructed him in his *about Christian Morals*, and other excellent Doctrines relating to the Providence of God, and the Immortality of the Soul: But as *Socrates* was twelve Years his Junior, we may as well suppose the Obligation, in point of Instruction, due to the Poet, as to the Philosopher; and the more so, because, as *Ælian* tells us, *Socrates* *seldom appeared at the Theatre but when some new Play was exhibited by Euripides, and then he never failed in his Attendance; for he lov'd the Man, and was particularly charm'd with the Virtue and Wisdom, that always shone in his Poetry,*

Aristotle commends him as *the most Tragick of all the Poets, tho',* says he, *he is not always accurately just in the Conduct and Disposition of the Fable.* Indeed, as the *French Critic* hereupon observes, he seems to have owed more to Nature than to Art, and to have been guided in his Compositions rather by the Motions of an humane and tender Heart, than the Dictates of a laborious and studious Mind. He felt what he wrote; it was the Constitution of the Man; who used no other

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other Art but to imitate Nature in the just Simplicity of the Language. Hence if his Stile be somewhat languid and diffusive, there is such Gracefulness in his Negligence, such an Elegance in his Softness, that, like some Ladies in *Disfhabille*, charm more than all the Powers of Art and Affectation. And with regard to this Play only, notwithstanding the *Compound Action*, if it be so, and the shocking Barbarity of sacrificing an innocent Princess, yet so noble are the Sentiments, so strong and beautiful the Images, so justly distinguish'd the Characters, and the Manners so truly mark'd, that one would think the *Spectator* had this very Play in view, when he says, N^o 39,

‘ As a perfect Tragedy is the noblest Production
 ‘ of human Nature, so it is capable of giving
 ‘ the Mind one of the most delightful and improving
 ‘ Entertainments. A virtuous Man (says
 ‘ *Seneca*) struggling with Misfortunes, is such a
 ‘ Spectacle as Gods might look upon with Pleasure.
 ‘ And such a Pleasure it is which one
 ‘ meets with in the Representation of a well-

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written Tragedy. Diversions of this kind wear out of our Thoughts every thing that is mean and little. They cherish and cultivate that Humanity which is the Ornament of our Nature; they soften Insolence, soothe Affliction, and subdue the Mind to the Dispensations of Providence.

The Modern Tragedy excels that of Greece and Rome in the Intricacy and Disposition of the Fable; but what a Christian Writer should be ashamed to own, falls infinitely short of it in the moral Part of the Performance.

I shall not stay to reply to the little Criticisms that have been rais'd against these Words of the Spectator; it is enough for me that they came from the judicious Mr. Addison; but shall observe, that beside the chief Moral of this Play, which is *the Frailty and Uncertainty of all human Grandeur, wherein Mortals cannot put their Trust, and are therefore led to an humble Resignation in all Things to divine Providence*, there are many great and important Lessons taught herein. The Particulars I need not specify, since as they are drawn

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drawn from pure Nature and Experience, they cannot but be obvious to every Capacity: And they have this further to recommend them, that as the Incidents arise in a natural and successive Order, so the Instructions intended arise naturally from the Turns and Circumstances of such Incidents, without the Absurdities of any detach'd Piece or unnatural Soliloquy. Let this be understood without the least Reflexion upon the immortal *Shakespear*, and we will proceed in our Remarks.

Page 1. *The Ghost of Polydore.*] Tho' *Euripides* was not the first that introduced Ghosts on the Stage, it having been attempted before by *Æschylus* in his *Perseæ*; yet the Opening the Plot in this manner, and acquainting the Audience with the Argument of the Fable, is altogether peculiar to him, and his own Invention. *Aristophanes* his Cotemporary rallied him for it *; and *P. Brumoy*, whom I here call the *French Critic*, severely censures his Conduct herein †. Others have defended it: But without entring into the

* Ran. ver. 977.

† Le Theatre des Grecs,

Dispute,

x *To the* R E A D E R.

Dispute, I would only ask, whether the most material Objection that can be made hereto, will not likewise hold good against seeing any Play represented a Second time; and with regard to the Play before us, whether any one can be so stupid as not to feel, what the Audience must needs feel, when *Hecuba* (p. 6.) is praying to the Gods for the Safety of her Son *Polydore*: Surely their having been before apprised of his Death, and the cruel manner of it, must have a stronger Effect in raising Pity and Compassion, than if they had not known this Circumstance; So when the Servant (p. 34.) brings in his Body veiled; and the like Observation may be made on many other Parts of this Play.

This then is generally called the *Prologue*; and as such observ'd here, but according to *Aristotle's* Division, the *Prologue* continued to the first *Choric-song*, or what we call the first Act: Then followed the *Episade*, which in the Second, Third, and Fourth Acts, divided by a *Choric-song*, contained all the Intrigues, or Plot, to the last singing of the *Chorus*; after which came the *Exode*, which
con-

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contained the *Peripetie*, or Catastrophe of the Play. But this exact Division into five Parts by *four Choric-songs* is not always kept; there being in some Plays more than *four*, in others not so many; as in this Play, there are properly but three *Choric-songs*; and the Play seems divided into five Parts or Acts, as some other are, by the Appearance of a new Personage: Act II. enters *Ulysses*; Act III. *Talthybius*; Act IV. *Agamemnon*; Act V. *Polymnestor*.

Page 13. *Chorus*.] The *Chorus*, or part of them were always present on the Stage, from the first opening of the Play to the End of it, and the Chief of them in the Name of the rest performed, in all Respects, the Part of an Actor; and herein they are to be distinguish'd from the *Chorus* (p. 24.) which is properly called the *First Entry of the Chorus*, (otherwise call'd the *Parode*, and the rest of the *Choric-songs*, *Stasimon*) and the principal use of them was, while something was doing or preparing without, to fill up the Time, in order to preserve a seeming *Unity*, and also to relieve the Audience by their Musick and Dancing. And here,

here, by the way, I cannot but think that were some of these ancient Plays judiciously translated, and the Choric-songs reduced to proper Measure, and masterly set and perform'd, a more engaging and rational Entertainment could not be desired by the most polite Audience. But not pretending to reform the present Taste, I contented myself with a bare Translation, keeping to the original Measure as near as possible, and preserving the Appearance at least of what they called the *Strophe* and *Antistrophe*. It would take up too much time to explain these, or the like *technical* Terms, and be of little use to the *English* Reader, I shall therefore pass on to

Act V. p. 48.] The Unities of *Action*, *Time*, and *Place*, have undoubtedly their Foundation both in Art and Reason, and, in the Opinion of the best Judges both ancient and modern, give Plays the last and highest, as well as the most engaging Perfection. Now as the Unities of *Time* and *Place* are sufficiently observ'd in this Play, I cannot but think the *Unity of Action* is so too, tho' the *French* Critick censures it for the

com-

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compound Action. The Introduction of *Polymnestor*, and I know not what else can here render the *Action double*, may be looked upon as an *Episode*; and *Episodes*, or various Under-actions, which are dependent on, and contribute to the main, destroy not the *Unity of Action*. But without dispute, as the *Fable*, like the *Action* is divided into *Simple* and *Implex*, this *Fable* is of the former kind: The *simple Fable* being that, in which there is no change of the Condition or State of the principal Person, which is called the *Peripetic*, or *Discovery*; and the unravelling the Plot is only a single Passage of Agitation or Trouble, or Repose and Tranquillity. Now the main *Action* of this *Fable* is the Distress of *Hecuba*, which still keeps rising on, from Incident to Incident, till here in the Conclusion she seems with great Satisfaction to enjoy her Revenge on *Polymnestor*. This Triumph indeed may, and ought to, give some disgust to our better Knowledge; and perhaps an Objection may be made to the Character of *Polymnestor* as here drawn, most infamously wicked, against the ancient Rules of the Stage.

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Stage. But we must observe, that *Polymaester* was but a petty Monarch, under Tribute to *Priam*; and such was the known History of him, which the Poet, according to Custom, here relates; and he might further perhaps intend a Compliment to the *Athenian* States, who were no Friends to regal Authority. Be that as it will: It is a Play, that has been generally admired, and has engaged several eminent Hands in translating it into *Latin*, but none more successfully than *Erasmus*. *Lodovico Dolce* translated it into *Italian* Verse, in the Year 1556, keeping strictly to the different Measures of the Original. But I do not know, that it has been attempted before in *English*. The Play under this Name, which in the Year 1725, met with such hard and unfair Treatment on the Stage, as the Author complains in his Preface, can by no means be called a Translation; as the *Prologue* and *Choric-songs* are entirely omitted; and many other Parts so alter'd and transpos'd, that it bears very little Resemblance to the Original. Whereas This being design'd merely as a Translation, I have taken no other Liberties

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Liberties than the flinging in now and then, I hope, a proper *Epithet*; and in Prol. l. 26. of changing the two *Epithets* * belonging to the *Altar*, and *Pyrrhus*, for two to *Polymnestor*, which do not clog the Sentence so much, I think, as the other wou'd, had they been translated.

I have only to add, that in preparing the Original for the Press, I diverted myself likewise in translating the *Alceſtis*, *Phœniſſæ*, and *Oreſtes* of the ſame Author, which ſhall follow, if the Reception of this ſhews a likelihood of their being thought *Uſeful and Entertaining*.

* The *Altar*, built to the Goddess *Minerva*, or nobly and divinely-built. *Pyrrhus*, the bloody-minded Son of *Achilles*.



DRA-



DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

HECUBA.

POLYXENA, her Daughter.

ULYSSES.

TALTHYBIUS, an Herald.

AGAMEMNON.

POLYMNESTOR.

An Attendant on Hecuba.

CHORUS of Trojan Women-Captives.

The Ghost of Polydore prologizeth.

The SCENE, throughout, the Grecian Camp.



ACT

HECUBA.



H E C U B A.

The GHOST of POLYDORE.

POLYDORE.



ORTH from the secret Caverns of the Dead,
And darksom Prison-house, where *Pluto*
dwells

In separate State from the *Olympian* Gods,
I *Polydore* am come; the much-lov'd Son
Of *Hecuba* and *Priam*: Who, in dread
Of Danger, threaten'd by the hostile *Greeks*,
Sent me from *Troy*, to *Thracian* ² *Cherronese*;
(Where *Polymnestor*, *Priam*'s Guest, receives
The Tribute of the fertile Plains, and rules
The warlike Nations with despotic Sway;)
And to secure from pinching Penury

¹ Grateful Antiquity generally deified the Persons of those who had been the Inventors of any useful Art. Hence, as *Pluto* was the first who instructed *Greece* in performing the Obsequies of the Dead, he was constituted supreme Monarch of the Shades below.

² *Cherronesus*, or *Cherronesus*, i. e. a *Peninsula*, or Country almost surrounded by the Sea. There are five of more special note; which see, under this Name, in the Dictionaries. This was likewise called *Cherronesus Hellepontica*, and *Pallene*.

The Sons, that might survive the Fate of *Troy*,
 The good old King sent with me Store of Gold :
 With me, the youngest of the royal Race,
 Unfit for Arms, and the rough Task of War.-----
 And while *Troy* stood, and gloried in her Strength,
 Supported by her Siege-proof Battlements,
 And *Hector's* mighty Arm ; I, as a Plant,
 Was nurs'd and cherish'd in the *Thracian* Court,
 With all the Dues of kind paternal Care.
 But soon as *Troy*, and *Hector*, *Troy's* Defence,
 Together fell ; and levell'd with the Ground
 The royal Palace lay ; my Father too,
 By *Pyrrhus* slain, ev'n at the Altar slain ³ ;
 Cruel, inhospitable *Polymnestor*
 Slew wretched me ⁴.----Such his dire Thirst of Gold.----
 And having slain me, cast me in the Deep,
 To be the Sport of Winds and Waves ⁵.----And now,
 While on the sandy Shore my Body lies
 Unmourn'd, unburied, hath my restless Soul,
 These three Days, hover'd o'er my Mother's Head,
 Ere since she hither came from ruin'd *Troy*.

For here the *Grecian* Fleet at Anchor rides,
 Wishing for Home, with idle Oars, detain'd

³ Authors, as usual, differ in this Point ; for *Pausanias* reports from the Authority of the Poet *Lesches*, (who wrote *The Fall of Troy*,) that *Priam* was not slain before any Altar, but that *Pyrrhus* by chance encountering him at the Gate of his Palace there slew him.

⁴ *Hyginus* relates this Story otherwise, viz. That *Polydore* was sent an Infant into *Thrace*, where *Ilione*, his Sister, Wife to *Polymnestor*, put him in the place of *Deiphilus*, *Polymnestor's* Son by another Wife ; whereupon *Polymnestor* not knowing this Artifice, slew his Son *Deiphilus*, instead of *Polydore*.

⁵ *Ovid*, l. 13. follows *Euripides* ; but *Virgil* l. 3. supposes *Polydore* pierced through with Arrows, and buried upon the spot.

By

By *Peleus*' Son; who o'er his Tomb appear'd,
Demanding my fair Sister *Polyxene*,
An honorary Victim to his Shade.

Nor prays *Achilles* this in vain.---The *Greeks*
All join in friendly Consort to reward
His Merit, with this horrid Sacrifice.---

This Day she dies.---'Tis so ordain'd by Fate⁶.---

This Day, when wretched *Hecuba* shall view
With tearful Eye, her Children's Clay-cold Corps,
Polyxena's and mine.---Ah! rueful Sight!---

For soon shall her distress'd Attendant find
My Sea-beat Body, stretch'd upon the Shore.
That to my Parent I may be restor'd,
And rest in Peace, with decent Rites entomb'd⁷.
This I have pray'd: And the infernal Pow'rs
Have granted my Request.---I ask no more.---

But I'll retire.---For lo! my Mother comes
From *Agamemnon*'s Tent, disturb'd by Dreams,
That nightly to her Mind presented me.---

⁶ We may observe here, that the Antients accounted for Death three several ways. The *Stoics* suppos'd it to happen by Fate; the *Epicureans*, by Chance; and the *Pythagoreans*, by Nature, or according to the Time of one's Nativity.---They likewise made a Distinction between a natural and violent Death, and buried the Deceas'd accordingly.

⁷ The Antients were solicitous for nothing so much as for Interment after Death: Hence the many passionate Requests, which we read, especially in the Poets, of Men, when dying, and their Ghosts, when dead, that they may obtain this the last and greatest of all Favours. And no wonder they should think it so, when we find it was their Opinion, that there was no Admittance into the *Elysian* Fields, or Regions of the Blessed, till their Bodies were buried; or at least, that without this, their Spirits wander'd about, forlorn and miserable, an *hundred Years*, before they were received into the common Receptacle of the Dead: Nay, that even their surviving Families were, in the mean while, *unlucky* and *accursed*.

I will not stay to terrify her more.---
 Ah! wretched Queen! how fall'n! how chang'd, from
 what

Thou wast in *Priam's* Court! a Queen indeed!
 But now a Slave, loaded with Misery!
 Such is the Will of Heav'n,---thus balancing
 With equal Scale thy former happy State. [Exit.]





ACT I. SCENE I.

HECUBA, and her Attendants, being part of the
CHORUS.

HECUBA.

LEAD me, my Daughters, lead me on,
A poor old Woman, once a Queen,
But now your Fellow-Servant ⁸.----
O, hold me, by my aged Hand,
Bear me, raise me, carry me along;
While, leaning on this crooked ⁹ Staff,
I tread the Ground with slow unequal Steps.----

O beamy Day! ---- ¹⁰ O darksome Night! ----
Why, why am I thus nightly rack'd;
In dire Suspense, with hideous Dreams,
And ghastly Apparitions? ----

O sacred Earth! from whom the Brood
Of black-wing'd Dreams ariseth ¹¹, grant

The

⁸ This Change of Fortune, from extreme Wealth to extreme Indigence, is looked upon by *Aristotle* and *Cicero*, as the first Topic in raising Pity. In which, how greatly our Author excels, we need, I think, no other Instance than the Play before us.

⁹ This Epithet *crooked*, is not altogether superfluous, as it in some measure betokeneth the low Condition of *Hecuba*. For *crooked Sticks* were used only by *Boors*, and the meaner sort of People.

¹⁰ This perhaps may allude to the Custom of telling their Dreams to the Sun, fancying they were thereby expiated.

¹¹ The Earth (says the *Scholiast*) is here called the *Mother of Dreams*, because from its Interposition between us and the Sun, comes Night, in which time we dream. — Or rather, because the Earth produceth

The Horrors of last Night may prove
Abortive ¹²; for I saw strange Things
Concerning my *Polyxena*,

And *Polydore*, my Son in *Thrace*.

Yes, it was dreadful, what I saw,
And felt, felt in my inmost Soul.-----

O all ye guardian Pow'rs on Earth,
Save, save my Son, (the only Hope,
And Anchor of our royal House,)

Who dwells in Snowy *Thrace*, the Care
Of once his Father's Friend and Guest.----

Some dire Event hangs o'er our Heads;
Some woful Song we have to sing,
In Misery extreme.----For ne'er
Was my foreboding Mind disturb'd
Before, with such incessant Pangs;
I tremble at Apprehension.----

Oh! where shall I *Cassandra* ¹³ find?
Where *Helenus* ¹⁴? My Doubts to solve,

Food, and Food causeth Sleep, and from Sleep come Dreams.——Or, it may be, because Dreams were generally ascribed to Ghosts or Spirits, whose Place of Residence was supposed beneath, or in the Centre of the Earth: From whence the Fiction, in both *Greek* and *Latin* Poets, of the two Gates, the one of *Horn*, the other of *Ivory*, through which Dreams pass in their way to Mortals.

¹² The Antients fancied they could elude the Consequences of any ill Omen or Dream, if either by Word or Deed they could shew they rejected it with Abomination.

¹³ *Cassandra*, the Daughter of *Hecuba*, and *Agamemnon*'s Prize by Lot, after the taking of *Troy*.

¹⁴ *Helenus* was likewise a Son of King *Priam*'s, and very eminent for his Skill in predicting future Events. The Original has it, *the divine Soul of Helenus*, by a *Periphrasis* in frequent use among the Poets; which the Scholiast not observing, fancied that *Helenus* was dead at this time, and that *Hecuba* really called upon his Soul. Whereas *Helenus* lived some time after the Fall of *Troy*, and marrying *Andromache*, *Hector*'s Widow, settled in *Greece*.

Inter-

H E C U B A.

7

Interpreting this baleful Dream.----
 I saw, methought, a spotted Deer,
 Torn forcibly from these my Arms,
 And mangled by the bloody Jaws
 Of a rapacious Wolf.----But what
 Strikes deeper Terror to my Soul;
 The Son of *Peleus*, o'er his Tomb,
 In shadowy Form, hath late appear'd,
 Demanding as his last Reward,
 Some Female Captive.----O ye Gods,
 From me, and from my Child, avert
 The fatal Consequence of this Request.----

S C E N E II.

Enter other Part of the CHORUS.

S E M I - C H O R U S.

O *Hecuba*, to thee I fly
 Leaving my Master's lordly Tent;
 Where, driven from my native Home,
 By the victorious Arms of *Greece*,
 'Tis now my Lot to live a Slave.----
 I come, alas! yet not to ease
 The heavy Burden of thy Cares;
 But still with doleful News to swell
 The ceaseless Sorrows of thy Soul.----
 They say, that by the cruel *Greeks*,
 In full Convention, 'tis agreed
 To sacrifice *Polyxena* ¹⁵.----

¹⁵ The Antients frequently offer'd human Sacrifices to the infernal Gods, and to the *Manes* of their Heroes. And no wonder *Achilles* should be supposed here to make this Request, who, when alive, had butcher'd twelve Captives at the Funeral of *Patroclus*.

H E C U B A

Such the Demand of *Peleus*' Son;
Who, when he o'er his Tomb appear'd,
Harnes'd in golden Panoply,
And with Authority detain'd
The Sea-plough Vessels of the *Greeks*,
(Their Sails wide spread for their Return,)
Utter'd these Words;

" Oh! whither, ye ungrateful *Greeks*,

" Fly ye so fast this *Thracian* Shore,

" Nor pay due Honours to my Tomb ¹⁶?----

Stormy Contention hence arose

Among the warlike Sons of *Greece*,

Divided in their Sentiments;

What Victim they should sacrifice,

Or whether sacrifice at all.----

Great *Agamemnon* honouring

Cassandra, the fair Prophetess,

His Paramour, seem'd well-inclin'd

To favour thee, and spare the royal Race.----

The Sons of *Theseus*, *Athens*' Pride ¹⁷,

Spake both, and both agreed, to crown

Achilles' Tomb with human Blood.

Nor fear'd these Heroes to declare,

¹⁶ I suppose here, with the Scholiast, that the *Greeks* during their Stay in *Cherronesus*, had built a *Cenotaph* to the Honour of *Achilles*, where his Ghost now appeared. Which seems more likely than that they should return to *Troy*, where *Achilles* was buried, and there offer this Sacrifice. And so the French Critic,---*La comme ils rendoient de nouveaux Honneurs funebre à Achille, dont le Corps étoit inhumé dans les champs Phrygiens, l'Ombre de ce Heros s'apparut à eux sur le Tombeau vuide qu'on lui avoit dressé, &c.*

¹⁷ *Acamas* and *Demophoon*: We find not these Brethren in *Homer*; but other Writers of the *Trojan* Story mention their actually warring against *Troy* at this Siege, and delivering from thence their Grand-mother *Æthra*.

Cassandra's

Cassandra's self ought not to live,
 Preferr'd to the *Achilleian* Spear.—
 The Rest in equal Parties gave
 Their several Verdicts: 'till arose
 The subtle, sweet-tongu'd Orator * *Ulysses*.
 Who, bowing popularly low,
 Thus artful said,---- " Shall we to save
 " A Captive's wretched Life, deny
 " Due Honours to the bravest *Greek*?
 " Shall it be said, among the Shades
 " In *Pluto's* Realms,---- The *Greeks* left *Troy*,
 " Unmindful of their Countrymen
 " Who bravely fell in War?-----
 His Words prevail'd.---- Soon, soon he comes
 To tear thy Daughter *Polyxene*
 From your weak aged Arms.-----
 But to the sacred Temples fly;
 Fly to the Altars ¹⁸.----Fall down low,
 In suppliant Posture, at the Feet
 Of *Agamemnon*;----And invoke
 The Gods in Heav'n above, and Gods
 Beneath the Earth.-----
 If Pray'rs cannot avail to save
 Your Daughter, soon must you behold
 Her, stretch'd a Victim on the Tomb;
 While gushing from her beauteous Neck,
 The warm Life-blood runs purple Streams adown.-----

¹⁸ The Nature and Privileges of these *Asyla*, or Sanctuaries, whether Temples, Statues, Altars, &c. are fully treated of in the Antiquities of *Greece*. But a very learned Author certainly quoted this Passage *memoriter*, or he had never said that it was *Polyxene* herself, who, being to be sacrificed, was thus advised by some one. Neither is the original *Greek* aright quoted.

HECUBA.

Ah! wretched me! with what Lament,
 What bitter Cries shall I express
 These my accumulated Woes?
 Burden'd with Age, and Slavery,
 Intolerable Slavery!

Alas! alas! where can I hope
 Protection? From what Race of Men,
 Or from what City?

Priam is dead: My Sons are dead;
 And *Troy-Town* is no more.

Or this, or that way shall I go?

Ah! whither shall I fly?

To what great God, or Demi-god,
 Shall I apply for Aid? —

Oh! what sad Tidings have ye brought,
 Ye *Trojan* Captives, Tidings ill!

Undone! undone! no more my Life
 Shall shine in courtly Splendor. —

Come, wretched Foot, bear me along,
 A poor old Woman, to yon Tent. —

O *Polyxene*, thou wretched Child
 Of a most wretched Mother; — Hear,
 Hear, and come forth, that ye may know
 The dreadful Rumour that is spread
 Concerning thy dear Life.

SCENE

HECUBA.

11

SCENE III.

Enter POLYXENE.

POLYXENE.

Say, my dear Mother, whence these Cries,
That force me, as a frightened Bird,
To fly my Place of Rest?

HECUBA.

Alas! my Child!

POLYXENE.

What means this ominous Proem?

HECUBA.

Alas! Alas!—Thy Life!—Thy Life!—

POLYXENE.

O keep me not in this Suspense.—
Speak, yet I dread to hear, the Cause
Of these heart-rending Sighs.—

HECUBA.

Wretched art thou, more wretched I—

POLYXENE.

What can this mean?—

HECUBA.

The *Greeks* unanimously join
Upon the Tomb of *Peleus*' Son
To sacrifice my Child.—

POLYXENE.

Alas! my Mother! great indeed,
Immensely great is our Distress.—
But say,—what?—How?—oh! speak.—

HECUBA.

Most horrible Report!—'Tis said,

That

That with united Voice the *Greeks*
Have sentenc'd thee to Death.—

POLYXENE.

O, how severe thy Sufferings!
Was ever Mother yet so wretched?
Expression cannot paint the Woes,
With which some God afflicts thee now.—
Thy Daughter is no more.—No more
Shall I Companion of thy Sorrows
Bring wretched Comfort.—
For soon shalt thou behold thy Child,
Born as I am of royal Race,
Torn from thy Arms, and, butchered like
A mountain-skipping Kid, sent down
To *Pluto*, in the Realms beneath;
Where with the Dead
For ever I must lie,—for ever!—
Yet 'tis for thee, I make Complaint,
And shed these unavailing Tears.
As for my Life, Misfortunes, Death;
I mourn them not.—To me is falln
The better Lot,—to die.



ACT



ACT II.

CHORUS, HECUBA, POLYXENE.

CHORUS.

AND see! *Ulysses* comes, with hasty Foot
And Message of Importance on his Brow.

Enter ULYSSES.

ULYSSES.

Lady, no doubt, you know the fix'd Resolve,
And Sentence of the *Greeks*.—Yet this it is:
The Chiefs in full Assembly have pronounc'd
The Death of *Polyxene*, a Sacrifice
Now to be offer'd on *Achilles'* Tomb.
The Province of Conductor is assign'd
To me, ungrateful Task!—And as the Priest,
Or Prefect, is ordain'd the Hero's Son.
Know you then, how to act? That neither Force,
Nor bootless Opposition be presum'd.
Consider well *our* Strength, and what severe
Misfortunes make *you* miserably weak.
'Tis Wisdom, in Distress to think aright.

Pyrrhus, called also *Neoptolemus*.—The Office of Priesthood among the Antients was held in such high Esteem, that in *Egypt* all their Kings were Priests. And in *Greece* none were admitted to that Office, but such as were eminent for their Birth or Qualities. As some therefore obtained this Office by Inheritance, others by the Designation of the Princes, and others by popular Election; *Pyrrhus* seems to have been appointed Priest occasionally here by the *Grecian* Chiefs.

HECUBA

H E C U B A.

Severe indeed!—Ah! how shall I support
 This Struggle, full of Bitterness and Woe!—
 Oh! had I died, what time I ought to've died!—
 But *Jupiter* preserv'd, and still preserves me,
 For greater Sorrows than I yet have known.—
 But if poor Slaves may ask the happy Free
 Some Questions, not absurd, and void of Taunt;
 Such 'tis for me to ask, and you to hear.

U L Y S S E S.

Ask; I will hear you, grudgeless of my Time.

H E C U B A.

You know, *Ulysses*, when you came to *Troy*,
 A Spy, disguis'd, in poor, and ragged Habit;
 While down your Cheeks soft-trickled Tears of Death—

U L Y S S E S.

Deep-fix'd is the Impression in my Heart.

H E C U B A.

Helen discover'd you to me alone,—

U L Y S S E S.

True; I remember well my *Jeopardy*.

H E C U B A.

Did you not stoop for Mercy at my Knee?

U L Y S S E S.

I did; and with a Hand benumb'd with Fear.

H E C U B A.

Yes; and I sav'd you, sav'd you for your Home².

² The *Scholiast* is pleas'd here to think the Conduct of our Poet not just; it being very improbable, that *Hecuba* should not betray so dangerous an Enemy, when she knew him. But how easy is it to conceive that the Art of *Ulysses* should baffle a weak old Woman, and make her swerve from Duty in this Point?

U L Y S S E S.

HECUBA

15

ULYSSES.

Or I had ne'er this Day beheld the Sun.

HECUBA.

What said you then, my humble abject Slave?—

ULYSSES.

Whate'er I cou'd invent to save my Life.

HECUBA.

Stand you not convict by your own Confession,
Owning such mighty Favours to 've receiv'd,
And yet repaying Evil still for Good?—
Ingratitude is the very Badge of all
Those cringing popular Orators, who smile
And smile, yet injure their best Friends,
So they can gain the Multitude's Applause.
I hate all such; oh! had I never known them!—
But what Pretext, what Sophism is advanc'd
To fix the cruel Sentence on *my* Child?
What dire Necessity can force the *Greeks*
Before the Tomb to shed this human Blood,
When far more proper is the Blood of Bulls?—
Or is't revengefully to slay the Slayer,
That thus *Achilles* to my Child points Death?
Why, what hath *she* done? or what cou'd she do?
Rather let *Helen* die: 'twas she, that brought
Achilles hither; she, for whom he fell.
Or, if selected for her Beauty, dies
Some Female-Captive; Beauty is not ours,
That Sphere belongs to *Helen*; *Helen* shines
Unrivall'd in her Charms by *Trojan* Dames;
Nor less injurious to the Dead than we.—
Thus, Sir, I argue on the Rules of Right.—

I now

I now will speak in point of Gratitude,
 You own, you touch'd this Hand, this aged Knee;
 My prostrate Suppliant; I now am yours.
 Your Hand, your Knee, I touch, in humble Pray'r;
 Not to tear from me this my dearest Child;
 But for *my* sake to save her wretched Life.
 Death is already glutted with the Slain.
 My every Comfort dwells in *Her*, my *Troy*,
 My tender Nurse, my Staff, and Guide of Life;
 Unjust Commands become not Conquerors,
 Nor let the Happy hope the same for ever.
 How happy was I once, tho' Nothing now!
 One Day bereav'd me of all worldly Bliss.
 But, oh! reverè, have pity on my Age,
 Go, kind *Ulysses*, to the *Grecian* Camp;
 There for us plead, and shew how mean it is,
 From the all-sacred Sanctuary to force,
 And kill poor helpless Women, whom they once
 Vouchsaf'd to spare ev'n in the Heat of Battle.
 Is not the Law concerning Blood the same
 Both with the Free-born and the *Slave*?—Besides,
 Such your Authority, if wrong it spake,
 (Could this be wrong,) it surely would persuade.
 For Words, when spoken by an eminent Man,
 And one of small Account, tho' the same Words,
 Have not the same Effect.—Such Pow'r is in *Degree*.

³ It was customary for Petitioners, if they were doubtful of Success to touch only the *Knees* of those to whom they address'd themselves. If they had Hopes, they touch'd the *Hand*; and if confident, the *Chin* or *Cheek*. Or, as the Commentator on *Pindar* has it, when they expected Consent, they touch'd the *Head*, to have it *annuere*: If they expected Help, they touch'd the *Hand*; if Success, the *Knee*. But I do not find that this Distinction was always observ'd.

CHORUS.

CHORUS.

Man's Nature cannot be so steel'd 'gainst Pity,
 As not to shed a sympathizing Tear,
 Hearing thy deep-fetch'd Groans and loud Lament.

ULYSSES.

Be advis'd, Lady; nor through Passion deem
 Me, while I speak you fair, your Enemy.—
 I'll ever study to preserve the Life,
 That mine preserv'd: This let me grateful say;
 Nor yet disown the Vote in Council giv'n;

"That, *Troy* now taken, to the Chief in War,

"Demanding her, ev'n *Polyxene* must fall

"A Victim.—Many States in this have err'd;

When with rank Cowards levelling the Brave,

They pocketed the Claim of patient Merit.

Achilles was an honourable Man,

And for his Country honourably fell.

Is it not base, to use a living Friend

Respectfully, and disregard him dead?

Be that as 't will.—Shou'd we again be call'd

To Arms, and mighty Nations rise against us;

Who wou'd enlist, so prodigal of Life?

Who wou'd not rather seek a safe Retreat,

Far from the Field of Battle; seeing they,

Who fall in War, are robb'd of their Reward?

However small my Pittance in this Life,

It is enough;—but dead, let me enjoy

The Honours of a monumental Stone

In latest Ages to preserve my Name.—

You say, you're wretched; hear me on this Point.

Are *Trojans* only wretched? has not *Greece*

Old Men, and Women, wretched all as thou?

C

Are

Are there not many *Grecian* Wives, who mourn
The best of Husbands, laid in *Trojan* Ground?
It is the Lot of Life. Hence learn to suffer.—

Call it our Ignorance or what you please,
That fondly we ordain to crown the Brave:
While ye *Barbarians* no Distinction make
Of Friends, nor honour those who bravely fall.
Yet so *Greece* flourisheth, while ruin'd *Troy*
Of wretched Counsels reaps the wretched Fruit.—

C H O R U S.

How miserable it is to be a Slave,
Subject, by Force, all Insults to endure!

HECUBA. [*turning to her Daughter.*]

In vain, my Child, I've pleaded for thy Life.
My fruitless Words are lost in Air, unheard.
Make thou Essay: Perchance thou canst do more.
Try every Note of the Night-warbling Bird,
To sooth *Ulysses* with the plaintive Sound.
In all the most expressive Signs of Woe,
Fall prostrate at his Feet, and urge this Plea;
There are, who call *Him* Father: Let him think
On what *their* Lot may be, and pity thine.

P O L Y X E N E.

I see, *Ulysses*, your Design; while thus
You in your folded Vestment wrap your Hand,⁴
And turn away your Face from my Approach.—
Fear not.— You have already gain'd your Point,
Rejecting all petitionary Form.⁵

⁴ This must be understood of the *right* Hand; for the Petitioners never offer'd to touch the *left* Hand, that being thought *unlucky*.

⁵ According to the Original, *You have not regarded my Appeal to Jupiter Icesius*: Under which Name *Jupiter* was worshipped as the *God of Supplicants*; and by which *Solon* commanded the *Athenians* to swear in publick Causes.

And

And be it so : — Lead on, I'll follow thee,
 A willing Martyr, tho' constrain'd to die.
 Seem'd I not willing, and still fond of Life,
 I shou'd betray a Weakness, which I scorn.
 For what is Life to me, to me, alas!
 A Wretch forlorn, tho' Daughter of a King,
 To whom all *Phrygia* their Obeisance paid;⁶
 Such my first Scene of Life, and such the Hopes,
 My royal Education once inspir'd;
 That rival Kings would for my Love contend.
 While as a Queen, among the *Trojan* Dames,
 Fair as the fairest, in majestick State
 I liv'd conspicuous, nor had more to ask
 Of heavenly Gifts, save Immortality.
 Behold me now a *Slave*! — That hateful Name,
 That uncouth Sound, makes me in Love with Death.
 Perhaps, I should be sold to some severe
 Remorseless Task-master, who wou'd compel
 The Sister of great *Hector*, to bake Bread,
 Or sweep the House, or labour at the Loom,⁷
 Spending my rueful Days in servile Toil.
 Or, shocking Thought! perhaps some rude He-slave
 Wou'd triumph to defile the Bed, which once
 Was thought a happy Portion for a King. —
 No; — rather let me change this Light of Life,
 To others free, for the dark Shades below. —

⁶ The Dominions of *Priam* were very large; containing all that Tract of Land called *Asia minor*, and by the *Turks* *Anatolia*; and Part of *Asia major*.

⁷ The *French* Critick cavils at this Detail: But I own, it gives me no Offence, considering the charming Simplicity of that Age; and that the Poet would not have used it more than once, as he has done in *Andromache*, and elsewhere; if by any means his nice Audience had thought it impertinent.

Lead then, *Ulysses*, lead me to my Death.
 For not a Thought, nor the least Gleam of Hope,
 Can promise me a happier Day on Earth.—
 And, O my dearest Mother, stay me not
 By Word or Deed, but freely give Consent,
 That I shou'd suffer, e'er I be compell'd
 To act beneath my Dignity of Birth.—
 Whoe'er is subject to untried Distress,
 Bears it indeed, yet grieves beneath the Yoke.
 But happier far it is to die, than live
 A vile and wretched Life, the greatest of all Ills.—

C H O R U S.

How visible is true Nobility,
 That always speaks in Character, and still
 Honours its Name by correspondent Deeds!

H E C U B A.

Well hast thou spoken, Daughter, tho' thy Words
 Pierce deep with Sorrow.—If it be resolv'd,
[Turning to *Ulysses*.

Ulysses, thus to gratify the Son
 Of *Peleus*, and avoid, you say, Reproach;
 O spare my Child; and to the craving Tomb
 Lead me, and butcher me: 't was I who bore
 That *Paris*, whose sure Dart *Achilles* slew.*—

U L Y S S E S.

Lady, his awful Shade requires the Death
 Of *Polyxene*, not thine.—

* *Paris*, the Son of *Hecuba* and *Priam*, having train'd *Achilles* into the Temple under Pretence of treating about his Marriage with *Polyxena*, there slew him, by wounding him in the Heel with an Arrow. *Homer* and *Virgil* suppose that *Apollo* directed the Shaft. And *Euripides* in *Philoctetes*, *Q. Calaber*, and *Ovid* seem to infer that the Arrow came from *Apollo* himself.—*Hyginus*, that it was done by *Apollo* in the Likeness of *Paris*.

H E C U B A.

HECUBA.

— Then slay us both;
And with a double Portion of our Blood,
Glut ye *Achilles*, and the thirsty Earth.

ULYSSES.

It is enough, for *Polyxene* to die,
We need no more.— And oh! that I could save
Ev'n *Polyxene*! —

HECUBA.

— She must, she shall be sav'd;
Or both shall fall, for I must die with *Her*.

ULYSSES.

'Tis not *your* Will, mistaken Queen, but ours,
Must be obey'd: for Masters we know none,

HECUBA.

Close-clinging as the Ivy to the Oak,
Here will I hold her. —

ULYSSES.

— Not, if you'll be rul'd
By wiser than yourself. —

HECUBA.

— Yes; I will hold her. —

ULYSSES.

In vain. — Without her I shall ne'er return.

POLYXENE.

Dear Mother, be advis'd. — And O thou Son

[Turning to Ulysses.]

Of great *Laertes*, can you not forgive
A tender Parent's Passion for her Child? —
But let us not contend with Conquerors;

[To her Mother.]

Wou'd you be drag'd disgracefully along

The rugged Ground, and wound those aged Limbs,
Torn forcibly by youthful Strength? — Oh no:
Unseemly Usage! Patience cannot bear it. —

Join your dear Hands with mine, your Cheek with mine;
And take my last Farewel: For I no more [*Embracing.*
Shall view the chearful Radiance of the Sun.
Down, down I go to the infernal Shades, —

H E C U B A.

But I, my Daughter, still must live a Slave.

P O L Y X E N E.

Depriv'd the promis'd Hymenéal Joys. —

H E C U B A.

Wretched art thou, more wretched Woman I!

P O L Y X E N E.

Severer still, without thee to lie there! —

H E C U B A.

What shall I do? how shall I end this Life?

P O L Y X E N E.

And free-born as I am, to die a Slave! —

H E C U B A.

And I, bereft of all my numerous Sons?

P O L Y X E N E.

What shall I say to *Hector*, or my Father?

H E C U B A.

That *Hecuba* of Women is most wretched.

P O L Y X E N E.

O ye dear Breasts, that sweetly nourish'd me!

⁹ The Original has it 50 Children, but according to *Apollonius's* Account *Priam* had by *Hecuba*, 10 Sons, viz. *Hector*, *Paris*, *Deiphobus*, *Helenus*, *Pantheon*, *Polites*, *Antiphus*, *Hipponous*, *Polydorus*, *Troilus*; and 5 Daughters, *Ilione* (the first-born) *Creusa*, *Laodice*, *Cassandra*, *Polyxena*; by other Wives 37 Sons, and 4 Daughters.

H E C U B A.

HECUBA.

O Daughter, doom'd to an untimely Fate!

POLYXENE.

Farewel, *Cassandra*! Farewel, dearest Mother!

HECUBA.

'Tis not for me, Child, ever to fare well.

POLYXENE.

And farewel to my Brother *Polydore*!

HECUBA.

Ay; if he lives; but such a Tide of Woe
Flows in upon me, that even this I doubt.

POLYXENE.

He surely lives, to close thine Eyes in Death."

HECUBA.

Alas! my Child, so great are my Misfortunes,
I am already dead, before my Death.

POLYXENE.

Take me away, *Ulysses*; veil my Head."

I cannot bear these piteous Sighs and Tears,
From a fond Parent; they will rend my Heart,
Before I fall a Sacrifice:—And mine
But serve t' enhance her Soul-afflicting Grief.—
O Sun!—For yet I may invoke thy Name;
Tho' I no longer shall behold thy Rays,
Than while from hence I reach the fatal Tomb.—

" This Custom has been universally observ'd in all Ages. But among the Antients it was peculiarly the Office of the nearest Relations to the deceased.

" To veil or cover the Head in great Sorrow and Affliction was Customary not only among Women, but also among Men, as we read in History both sacred and prophane. It seems likewise here preparatory to the Sacrifice.

H E C U B A.

[Ulysses leading away Polyxene.]

Alas!— my Daughter!— oh! I faint, I die.—
 My Nerve-forfaken Joints all fail me.— Give,
 Give me thy Hand.— Oh! do not leave thy Mother
 Childless.— [Exeunt Ulysses and Polyxene,

—Undone, my Friends, we are undone!
 Oh! cou'd I see the *Spartan Helen* thus,
 Thus wretched, and forlorn, altho' she prides
 Herself in her Twin-Brothers, Sons of *Jove*!¹²
 'Tis she that with her fascinating Eyes
 Hath ruin'd and destroy'd the once most happy *Troy*.

C H O R U S.¹³

O whither ye brisk Winds, that waft
 The ploughing Vessels o'er the Deep,
 Whither will ye carry me,
 Doom'd to be an Household-Slave?
 Or to the *Doric Shore*?
 Or the *Thessalian*; where they say,
Apidanus, the King of Rivers,
 Fattens the Fields
 With his wide-flowing Tides?

II.

Or will ye help the bending Oar,
 To convey me wretched Slave,
 To that famous Island; where
 First the lofty verdant Palm,

¹² *Castor and Pollux*, the Sons of *Jupiter* by *Leda* Mother of *Helen*.

¹³ *Hecuba* falling upon the Ground, and lying there overwhelm'd with Sorrow, the *Chorus* reflect upon their own future Condition, not knowing to what Land they might be carried, or in what Offices employed, as Slaves.

And

And Virgin-laurel spread
Their sacred Boughs, assistant to
Latona's Labour¹⁴; There, to sing with
Delian Maids
Diana's Tier and Bow?

III.

Or at *Athens* shall I weave,
In the Saffron-colour'd Robe
Flower'd with rich Embroidery,
The Horses, and the golden Car
Of *Pallas* the Protectress?
Or the bold *Titanian* Race¹⁵,
Whom *Jupiter*, Son of *Saturn*,
With fire-wing'd Lightning flew?—

IV.

Ah! Alas! for me, and mine!
Children, Parents, Country, which
Now in smoky Ruin lies,
The Spoil of the wide-conquering *Greeks*!
And I, a foreign Captive,
Leaving my native *Asia*
Proud *Europe's* Slave¹⁶, must with my Bed
Purchase Escape from Death.

¹⁴ When flying from the Wrath of *Juno* she came to *Delos*: And here leaning against, and shaded by the *Palm-Tree*, she brought forth *Apollo* and *Diana*. Hence it was customary for Women in Labour to hold Palm-Branches in their Hands, as Tokens likewise of Joy and Conquest.

¹⁵ The Poet never omits an Opportunity of extolling his own Country. He here alludes to a Ceremony, used in the Celebration of the great *Panathenæa*: When the *Peplus* or Robe (woven by a select set of Virgins, and in which were described the Achievements of *Minerva*, especially those against the Giants) was carried in Procession, and put upon the Statue of *Minerva* the Protectress of the City.

¹⁶ The famous *Trojan* War was looked upon as the decisive Struggle between the Powers of *Europe* and *Asia*.



A C T III.

TALTHYBIUS, CHORUS, HECUBA.

TALTHYBIUS.

YE Trojan Damsels, say, where shall I find
The wretched *Hecuba*, late Queen of *Troy*?

CHORUS.

See there, *Talthybius*, where on the cold Ground
She prostrate lies, enwrap't in mourning Weeds.

TALTHYBIUS. [*looking on Hecuba.*]

What shall I say? ye Gods, do ye behold
Human Affairs with providential Care?
Or is it all Opinion, and Surmise,
While fickle *Fortune* governs all below?
Is this rich *Phrygia's* Queen? Is this the Wife
Of *Priam* the renown'd? Whose City lies
In Ruins, totally eras'd; and here
His wretched Queen, a poor, old, childless Slave,
Covering her lamentable Head with Dust?—
Alas! I too am old, yet, fond of Life
As old Men are, I freely wish to die,
Before I fall into such dire Distress.—
Rise, thou unhappy Woman;—from the Ground
Lift up thy hoary Head, and painful Side.

* We may happily look upon these Sentiments now as absurd and impious; but they were natural enough, when the Notion of Fatality was universally spread among the People; and therefore at that time they gave no Offence

HECUBA.

H E C U B A.

27

H E C U B A.

What cruel Man forbids me to lie here?

Whoe'er thou art, why dost thou wake my Woes?—

T A L T H Y B I U S.

I am *Talthybius*, Servant of the *Greeks*.—

Great *Agamemnon* sends for thee, O Queen.—

H E C U B A. [*Rising.*]

O thou dear Man, what? Have the *Greeks* decreed
To sacrifice *me* too? most joyful News!—

Come, let us haste, let us fly, thou good old Man.

T A L T H Y B I U S.

My Errand, Lady, is no more than this.—

The two *Atrides*, and the *Grecian* Chiefs,

Have sent for you to bury *Polyxene*.

H E C U B A.

Alas! what say you? Talk'st thou not of Death,
Design'd for me? All else thou say'st is ill.----

And hast thou suffer'd, O my Child, thus torn

From thy dear Mother's Arms, whom thou hast left

Now childless, and forlorn, a Wretch indeed!----

But did ye slay your Victim decently?

Or torture her with hostile Cruelty?

Say, tho' thou speakest most ungrateful Things?----

T A L T H Y B I U S.

Again you bid the mournful Tear to flow

In pity of the beauteous Sacrifice:

* The *French* Critic seems to doubt the Propriety of this Request, as the Recital must needs be shocking to a Parent's Ear. But it was natural enough for *Hecuba* to enquire after the Treatment her Daughter had met with from the *Greeks*, as she still thought they had sacrificed her more out of Policy and Hatred, than in Honour of *Achilles*: And the Poet has managed the Description (in which he generally excels) with such a masterly Hand, that it rather comforts than afflicts her.

For

For fore I wept to see the tragic Scene
Nor can relate it, but with streaming Eyes.----

Around the destin'd Victim stood the *Greeks*
In full Assembly.----When *Achilles'* Son,
Taking your Daughter by the lilly Hand,
Placed her on high upon his Father's Tomb.----
Near them stood I, and several chosen Youth,
To check the Strugglings of the dying Fair.---
Then holding in his Hand the golden Cup,
He made Libation to his Father's Shade³:
And bade me order, through the *Grecian* Bands,
An universal Silence.----I obey'd,
And cried,——Ye *Greeks* be silent, silent all.——
Mute stood the wondring Throng.---And thus he spake.—
“ O Son of *Peleus*, my dread Sire, accept
“ Propitious these *Libations*, which are wont
“ To draw the listning Dead from their Abode.----
“ Come forth; and drink the pure and purple Blood
“ Of this fair Maid, here offer'd in the Name
“ Of all the Host, your Favour to regain.----
“ Release our Ships.----Let us again set Sail,
“ And with a safe, and happy Voyage from *Troy*,
“ Behold our native Home with feasted Eyes.
Thus he.----And all the Army pray'd the same.----
Unsheathing then the golden-hilted Sword,

³ The usual Libation to the *Dead* consisted chiefly of *Honey*, *Milk*, and *Wine*; but especially of *Honey*, that being accounted a *Symbol*, or *Emblem of Death*. And the manner of their using these Liquors, was to go round the Sepulchre, and pour out some as they went along; and then to do the same upon the Grave; adding some certain Speech, and making Prayer to the Gods, and the Ghost of the deceased, to be propitious to them. Hence these Libations were called *propitiatory*, *oblationary*, *delinitive*, &c.

He nodded to the *Grecian* Youth select,
 To hold the Victim for the lifted Stroke:
 Which she perceiving, thus resentful said. —
 “ Ye *Greeks*, whose Armies have laid waste our *Troy*,
 “ Know, that I willing die. — Let therefore no one
 “ Touch me with forceful Hands. — I wou’d die free;
 “ And being born a Queen, ev’n in the Shades
 “ Should be asham’d to hear, *She died a Slave*. —
 The People murmur’d their Applause. — The King
 Order’d the Chieftains to forego their Hold;
 Who, when they heard the high and mighty Voice
 Of him, in whom was lodg’d the Pow’r Supreme,
 Releas’d their Charge. — When, finding she was free,
 She on her Vestment laid her eager Hands,
 And rent it to the Waste; and thus expos’d
 Her snowy Breasts, more beauteous to behold,
 Than Art can imitate in sculptur’d Stone.
 Then kneeling on the Ground, she utter’d these
 Her last, most pity-pleading Words. — “ Young Prince,
 “ If this my Bosom you intend to strike,
 “ Behold, I am prepar’d, now strike; — Or, if
 “ My Neck; Thus, thus, I bend it to your Sword. —
 He, willing, and unwilling, not unmov’d
 With soft Compassion for the innocent Maid,
 Cut with the sharp-edg’d Sword the jugular Vein. —
 Fast flow’d the purple Streams; and down she fell:
 But in the very Agonies of Death,
 Was careful to preserve a decent Fall. —
 When now the Spirit from the Body fled;
 A different Task employ’d a different *Greek*.
 With Leaves and Flow’rs some the Body strew’d⁴;

⁴ It was customary among the *Greeks* to crown the Corps, as well as
 the Tomb of the deceased, with Herbs and Flowers; particularly with
 such

Others cut down the lofty Pines to raise
A spacious Pile.---And who so idle stood
Was sure to hear this or like Reprimand.

“Thou base, ungenerous Man, why stand you here,
“Without a Robe, or other Ornament,
“For the deceas’d?—What? will you nothing give
“To one, who died with such a noble Grace,
“Such an exalted Spirit?—Thus they spake
In praise of *Polyxene*.—Most happy thou
In such an Offspring;—yet alas! how wretched!

C H O R U S.

Heavy Calamity hath fall’n on *Troy*,
And all the House of *Priam*.—But the Gods
And all-controlling Fate have so ordain’d.

H E C U B A.

Hemm’d in with such Variety of Ills,
I know not where to look, or which to mourn;
If this; another, and another calls,
And still successively distracts my Mind.——
Fain would I mourn, my Child, thy cruel Fate;
But this Relation bids me not indulge
Immoderate Grief; so nobly didst thou fall.——

‘It is no wonder that unfertile Ground,
‘In some kind Season, shou’d produce good Fruit;
‘Or that good Ground, when destitute of Rain,

such Flowers, as were of a purple or white Colour. The Reason of it was to express the quiet Condition of the Dead, and their Freedom from Care and Trouble. Or rather, as the Scholiast directs, to honour the *Dead*, as they were used to do the *Living*; who in any of the Games came off Conquerors: *Polyxene* having merited the like Honours here, for such her Greatness of Soul, and noble Behaviour at her Death.——This Custom of strewing Flowers, &c. was likewise used by the *Romans*, as we learn from *Varro*, L. L. l. 6. *Ad Sepulchrum ferunt Frondes*, &c.

‘Or

' Or proper Seasons should produce bad Fruit :
 ' But Man, by Nature vitiously inclin'd,
 ' Still remains vitious ; and the good, still good,
 ' Triumphant o'er the Trials of Adversity.——
 ' To Education owe we this, or Birth ?——
 ' Right Education gives the docil Mind,
 ' A sense of Good, and Ill ; and plainly points
 ' A Rule, which who so follows cannot err.——
 ' These Things my lab'ring Mind flings out in vain ;
 But Go, *Talthybius*, and desire the *Greeks*
 To drive away the busy Populace ;
 That none may lay rude Hands on the Deceas'd.
 For in a num'rous Army will be found
 Some vile ungovernable Miscreants :
 And fiercer than the raging Flame is that
 Licentiousness, that knows no Law, among
 Sea-faring Men ; when, he who follows not,
 Is reckon'd bad, because he does no ill.——

[Exit *Talthybius*.]

And, O my good old Servant, take this Urn
 And fill it with Sea-water, that my Child,
 A Bride unmarried, and a Virgin-Wife⁶,
 May with this last and customary Bath
 Be washed ; and other worthy Rites perform'd.——
 But whence ? or how ? It cannot be.——Yet such
 As we now can, we will.——And what is that ?——
 I will collect whatever Ornament ?

My

⁵ The *French* Critic thinks so too. But the *Greeks* in all their Writings abound in *moral Sentences*.

⁶ This alludes to her having been betroth'd to *Achilles*, and now, as it were married to him, in this her Death.

⁷ After the dead Body was washed, and generally anointed with Oil, it was wrapped in the Garment they usually wore, and after that
in

My Fellow-captives have preserv'd, (by Stealth
From their new Masters, the victorious *Greeks*,)
If any be preserv'd from ruin'd *Troy*.—

O thou once splendid City, now no more
Than an idéal Name! O royal House,
Once noble! And thou *Priam*, mighty King,
Most happy in thy numerous Sons! nor less
Was I a happy Mother! but alas!
How are we falln to nothing! how depriv'd
Of all our former Pomp!— Yet Man is proud;

- ‘ Some in the Stateliness of Palaces,
- ‘ And others in an honourable Name.
- ‘ And what are these, but specious Trifles all?
- ‘ Vain are our Cares, and all our Boastings vain.
- ‘ None, none are happy, but such Prodigies
- ‘ Of Men, as, through their Lives, have known no Ill.

[Exit Hecuba.]

CHORUS.

I.

Wretchedness hung o'er my Head,
And I was doom'd to Sorrow;
When *Alexander* * first cut down
Th' *Idéan* Fir-groves;
And set sail advent'rous,
Through the high-swelling Seas,

in a splendid *Winding-Sheet*; which they were so solicitous for, as that they generally prepared it for themselves and Friends, during Life. The Colour of it among the *Grecians* was white, and among the *Romans* black.

* i. e. *Paris*, afterwards called the royal *Herdsmen*; whose Story, concerning his *Judgment* between the three Goddesses on Mount *Ida*, and his Rape of *Helen*, is too well known, to need a Recital here. And concerning the Beauty of *Helen*, so much admired, even by her Enemies, see *Pope's Hom. Il. l. 3. v. 138*.

To

To mate with *Helena*, than whom
 On One more fair
 The golden Sun did never shine.

II.

Labour hard, and far more strong
 Necessity furrounds me.
 Public Calamity hath ensued
 From private Folly;
 And dire Desolation

Laid waste the *Trojan* Land.

The Trial of the Goddesses

On *Ida's* Top

By the royal Herdsman was adjudg'd

III.

For War and Slaughter.----Nor alone

Suffer'd the Families of *Troy*:

But near *Eurotas'* gentle Stream,

The *Spartan* Maidens sit,

Bedew'd with flowing Tears,

And *Grecian* Matrons having lost

Their Sons in Battle, beat

Their hoary Heads, and with the Blood

Soft-trickling from their Cheeks

Dye their remorseless Hands.

⁹ A famous River of *Laconia*, running by *Sparta*, much celebrated by the Poets.





ACT IV. SCENE I.

CHORUS, and Servants bringing in the Body

POLYDORE veil'd.

SERVANT.

YE Trojan-Women, say, where shall I find
All-wretched *Hecuba*? Sure never Man,
Or Woman, tasted such a bitter Cup,
Or will dispute with *her* the Crown of Woe.

CHORUS.

Whence all this Clamour? Will thy restless Tongue
From such ill-ominous Proems never cease?

SERVANT.

Alas! I bring her this additional Grief.
Nor is it easy in such sore Distress,
Or to be silent, or to speak smooth Words.----

CHORUS.

Lo! from her Tent she opportunely comes.

SCENE II.

Enter *HECUBA*.

SERVANT.

O thou most miserable of all thy Sex,
My royal Mistress, Words cannot describe
Thy Wretchedness.----Thou art undone, and dead,

And

And worse than dead, without a Home, without
Or Child, or Husband.---Misery extreme!

HECUBA.

All this I know; nor new is thy Reproach.---
But what? why bring you hither *Polyxene*?
Whose decent Funeral I am told the Greeks
Provided for with all industrious Care.

SERVANT. [*Aside.*]

Alas! she thinks that this is *Polyxene*;
And dreams not of Surprise by new Distress.

HECUBA.

What say'st thou? dost thou bring me then the Corps
Of my *Cassandra*, Heav'n-taught Prophetess?

SERVANT.

Oh, no; *Cassandra* lives.---The truly dead
You mourn not; but behold the naked Face,
And wonder at the unexpected Sight.---

[*She unveils the Corps of Polydore.*]

HECUBA.

What do I see, alas! my *Polydore*!
My dearest Son! Ward of the *Thracian* King?
Then am I miserable, and dead indeed.---
Alas! my Son! my Son!---Now let me rave
Mad as a *Bacchinalian*, having learn'd
Fresh Misery from the afflicting God.---

SERVANT.

Didst thou then know the Death of *Polydore*?

HECUBA.

No, no;---'Tis new; incredible and new,
What I now see. Misfortune

On

The Passion of *Hecuba*, as the French Critic observes, is finely
drawn in this Scene; which, from the Change of Measure, he rightly
supposes

On Misfortune follows close;
Nor leaves a Day without a Tear,
And a new Tide of Woe.---

SERVANT.

'Tis horrible; most horrible indeed!

HECUBA.

O thou dear Boy! thou Son
Of a most wretched Mother!
How didst thou die?
What Death? by what Mishap?
Or wast thou slain by Man?

SERVANT.

Indeed I know not: On the Shore I found him.---

HECUBA.

Or, by the Waves thrown up? or murder'd there?

SERVANT.

The billowing Tide had thrown him on the Sands.

HECUBA.

Alas! alas!

Now understand I the sad Dream
I saw, concerning thee my Son!
When late thy black-wing'd Spectre
Pass'd o'er my Head, discovering
That thou wert then no more.---

SERVANT.

O skill'd in Dreams, know'st thou the Murderer?

HECUBA.

Ay, ay; it was
The cruel *Thracian* Host,

supposes to have been sung, or at least accompanied with Instruments, to animate and raise the Actors; as in many of the *Greek* Tragedies, where the Scenes, being extremely passionate, are parcell'd into Stanzas, as at the End of an Act.

With

HECUBA.

37

With whom his aged Father
Intrusted him for Safety.—

SERVANT.

And for his Treasure he hath slain thy Son?

HECUBA.

Detestable, abominable Deed!

Impious beyond the Reach of Admiration!—

Where is the Right of Hospitality?—

Thou execrable Man,

How hast thou butcher'd,

With remorseless Sword,

The tender Limbs

Of this fair Youth?

O my Child, my Child!

SERVANT.

O, how severely art thou press'd and gall'd

With ceaseless Sorrows, by some angry God!

But see—the mighty Agamemnon comes,---

The King!—my Friends! Silence will best become us.

SCENE III.

Enter AGAMEMNON.

AGAMEMNON.

Why comest thou not to bury *Polyxene*,

O *Hecuba*? The Word *Talthybius* brought

At thy Request, that none presume to touch

Thy Daughter, is observ'd by our Command.---

And yet, 'tis strange, thou comest not there thyself².

Our Purpose is to call thee.---For all Things

That you could ask are decently perform'd,

² *Agamemnon* wonders at her Delay in burying *Polyxene*; this being the Office of a Parent or nearest Relation.

And well, if *well* to such Affairs belongs:—
Hah! what Son of *Troy* is this who here lies slain?

[*Seeing Polydore.*
The folding Vesture speaks him not of *Greece*.]

H E C U B A. [*Aside, looking down upon Polydore.*]

Unhappy *Polydore*, for such I call
Myself, in calling thee!—But what shall I,
Poor *Hecuba*, now do? Shall I fall down
At *Agamemnon's* Knee a Suppliant?
Or mourn in painful Silence this Distress?—

A G A M E M N O N.

Why dost thou turn away thy Face, and weep,
Concealing still the Cause? Say, who is this?

H E C U B A. [*Aside.*]

Perhaps contemning me, a hostile Slave,
He will reject me, and increase my Woe.—

A G A M E M N O N.

Woman, I can't divine.----Unless I hear,
It is impossible to know, thy Thoughts.

H E C U B A. [*Aside.*]

But why should I judge him unfriendly, who
Perhaps is now mine Enemy no more?—

A G A M E M N O N.

Well;—If such your Resolution, not to speak;
We are agreed; and mine is, not to hear. [*Going.*]

H E C U B A. [*Aside.*]

Yet without him how shall I e'er revenge
My Children's Death? Why then these Reveries?
Necessity emboldens us to speak;
And I will speak, whate'er the Consequence.

O *Agamemnon*, by thy Knee I pray,

And by thy Beard, and thy victorious Hand,—

A G A M E M N O N.

AGAMEMNON.

Name your Request then; be it to regain
Your Freedom, only ask, and you are free.

HECUBA.

Not so; but could I punish Perfidy,
Most willing would I be a Slave for Life.

AGAMEMNON.

Wherein can I assist you, *Hecuba*?

HECUBA.

Not in the manner you suppose, O King.---
See you this Clay-cold Corse I now bewail?

AGAMEMNON.

Indeed I see it, but know nothing more.

HECUBA.

Know then he was my Son, my Son indeed.

AGAMEMNON.

Unhappy Queen! And was This too thy Son?

HECUBA.

Yes, but not one of those who fell in War.

AGAMEMNON.

And hadst thou other Sons then beside those?

HECUBA.

To little purpose;—for example, This.

AGAMEMNON.

And where was This, when *Troy*, your City, fell?

HECUBA.

His cautious Father sent him safe away.

AGAMEMNON.

And whither did he send this One alone?

HECUBA.

Into this Land, where dead, alas! he lies.

AGAMEMNON.

What say you?—Here?—To *Polymnestor's* Court?

HECUBA.

HECUBA.

Yes, to preserve for us the fatal Treasure,

AGAMEMNON.

How? or by whom do you suppose him slain?

HECUBA.

Sure by none other than his *Thracian* Host.

AGAMEMNON.

Think you, that he so thirsted for his Gold?

HECUBA.

Ev'n so. Soon as he knew the Fall of *Troy*.

AGAMEMNON.

Found you him here? or was he brought to you?

HECUBA.

My Servant found him on the sandy Beach.

AGAMEMNON.

Or seeking him, or otherwise employ'd?

HECUBA.

She went for Water to bathe *Polyxene*.

AGAMEMNON.

It seems he slew him then, and cast him out?—

HECUBA.

Yes, to the Winds and Waves, all mangled thus.

AGAMEMNON.

Unhappy Woman! how immense thy Woes!

HECUBA.

Undone indeed! I cannot suffer more.

AGAMEMNON.

Alas! what Woman was there e'er so wretched?

HECUBA.

None, surely; I am Misery itself.

But why thus lowly at your Feet I fall,

O *Agamemnon*, hear.—And if to you

I seem to suffer what is just and right,
 Farewel Complaint: If not, on you I call,
 On you, to avenge me on this impious Host,
 Who, fearing neither Gods above, nor Gods
 Below, dar'd perpetrate this horrid Deed.—
 Ev'n He, who oft had been our honour'd Guest,
 The first and dearest in the Rank of Friends,
 And had receiv'd all Dues of Guardianship,
 With Guile premeditated slew my Son,
 And, having slain him, cast him in the Deep,
 Without the common Rites of Sepulture.—
 We may be weak indeed, and weaker still,
 As poor and wretched Captives, but the Gods
 Are strong, and stronger yet the Law³, by which
 We rule our Lives, hence knowing there are Gods.
 Now if this sacred Law, of which the Gods
 Appointed you the Guardian, shou'd be broke,
 And violated with Impunity;
 If, or the Murderer, who kills his Guest,
 Or he, that's guilty of sacrilegious Theft,
 Escape; farewell all Equity on Earth.—
 Abhorrent of this impious Deed, respect,
 And pity me, O King.—As Painters stand
 Aloof, beholding some affecting Piece,
 Stand, and behold my Misery: Once a Queen,
 But now your Slave; Mother of many Sons,
 Now Childless; old, forlorn, extremely wretched.—
 Ah! whither dost thou turn thy Foot away?
 Vain are my Words, I find, and vain my Tears.—

* Why with laborious, but due Industry

³ i. e. The immutable Fitness of Things, or the moral Sense of Good and Evil.

' Do Mortals study other Sciences;
 ' And yet neglect *Persuasion*, Queen of all?
 ' Why grudge Expence to gain Perfection *here*;
 ' Which all Things else that they cou'd wish, wou'd gain?—
 How otherwise can we expect Success?
 —Of all my Children, not one Comfort left!
 Myself a mean, and miserable Slave!
 And lo! in smoky Ruins lies my *Troy*!
 How, or from whom then can I hope Redress?—

It is in vain, perhaps, O King, to speak
 Of Love's Endearments; yet I beg your Leave.
 Lies not my beauteous Daughter by your Side,
Phebas, whom *Pbrygians* fair *Cassandra* call?
 How will you shew what pleasurable Nights
 You have enjoy'd? Or what Return will you,
 For all the soft Caresses of her Love,
 Now make to *her*, and, for her sake, to *me*?
 Such Doings are not wont, O King, to fail
 Of highest Favours with the Sons of Men.——

Hear me once more.—Behold this Corse, and know,
 Justice to Him, is doing Justice, Sir,
 To your own Kinsman*.—But I find, one Voice,
 One Tongue is not enough.—Oh! that I had
 A Tongue in every Limb, my Legs, my Arms,
 And hoary Locks, by some *Dadalean* Art^s,
 Or Pow'r miraculous of the Gods above;
 That all might sue unto your Knee for Pity,
 Expressful of the bitter Woes I feel!

* I suppose *Hecuba* look'd upon *Cassandra* as the Wife of *Agamemnon*, and therefore here calls *Polydore* *Kinsman*, his Wife's Brother.

^s *Dædalus* is suppos'd to have form'd his Images so near the Life; that, having Motion in their Eyes and Lips, they seem'd both to see and speak.

O my good Lord, thou Glory of the *Greeks*,
Hear me a poor old Woman, and stretch out
Thy helping Hand, avengful of this Deed.
True, I am nothing; but consider, Prince,
How good a thing it is to serve the Cause
Of Justice, and at all times to resign
Th' Oppressor to his legal Punishment.

CHORUS.

‘ Mortal Affairs are subject to strange Turns.
‘ Relative Duties are determin’d by
‘ The rule of Right, which makes most cordial Friends
‘ Of Enemies, and Enemies of Friends ‘

AGAMEMNON.

All the Afflictions of thyself, and Son,
O *Hecuba*, with Pity I behold;
Nor less regard thy supplicating Hands:
And for the sake of Justice and the Gods,
Wou’d punish this bold Villain.—If so be,
You I cou’d gratify therein; nor seem
To my own People, for *Cassandra*’s sake,
To meditate Revenge and Death.—Here then
I pause,—for why? The *Grecian* Army deems
The *Thracian* Prince their Friend, and good Ally;
And the slain *Polydore* their hateful Foe.

⁶ I know not whether I have express’d this doubtful Passage, so as to be rightly understood; but I take it to be this.—*Hecuba* had said, that it was the part of a good Magistrate at all Times and in all Places to do Justice, in punishing Delinquents. Hereupon the *Chorus* observes, that however *Hecuba* might seem the Enemy of *Agamemnon*, and *Polymnestor* the Friend, yet the everlasting Rule of Right set aside that Distinction; and *Agamemnon* was oblig’d in Justice to treat *Polymnestor* as an Enemy, and *Hecuba* as a Friend.—This is really a fine Sentiment, and more just I think, than what from the *Paraphrast*, and others, I admitted into the Text, viz. That the distinction of Friends and Foes, and the Laws concerning them, were to be determin’d by mere Necessity.

And

What? if to you, his Mother, he was dear;
Does this concern the Publick? No; tho' you
It may concern indeed.—Consider then,
That willing as I am, and prompt to serve
This your distressful Cause, I must proceed
With Caution, if suspected by the *Greeks*.

H E C U B A.

• Alas there is no Mortal free on Earth,
• Men are all Slaves, to Fortune, or to Wealth:
• Or written Laws, or headstrong Multitudes
• Restrain the Deed from tallying with the Will.
But, if you reverence with unkingly Fear
The Populace, I'll ease you of that Fear.
Be privy only to what I intend
Revengeful; and of you I ask no more.—
Shou'd any mutinous Tumult hence arise,
At the vile *Thracian's* dreadful Sufferings,
Be't yours, O King, to quell it, artfully,
Not seemingly in my Behalf;—the rest
Be mine;—my Part I'll surely well perform.

A G A M E M N O N.

But what will you perform? can you pretend
With those enervate aged Hands to wield
The slaught'ring Sword against this *Thracian* Prince?
Or do you Poison meditate?—but where
Do you expect Assistance? or what Friends?—

H E C U B A.

In yon Pavillion is a *Trojan* Troop.—

A G A M E M N O N.

Of Female-Captives, I suppose, you mean?

H E C U B A.

Yes; and by these the Murderer shall fall.

A G A M E M N O N.

AGAMEMNON.

But how can Women vie with manly Strength?

HECUBA.

A Multitude is terrible; and arm'd
With crafty Guile, may be a match for Strength.

AGAMEMNON.

A Multitude is terrible; but weak,
How great soever, what consists of Women.

HECUBA.

Why so? The Sons of proud *Egyptus* fell
By Women⁷; Women in the *Lemnian* Isle
Slew every Husband⁸—Be it as it will;
So you will leave this Enterprize to me;
I only ask free Passport for my Maid.—

And now, thou faithful Servant, go with Speed

[To her Servant.

To *Polymnestor*, and, with fraudulent Words,

Say, “ *Hecuba*, late Queen of *Troy*, not less

“ For his sake, than her own, invites him hither,

“ Him, and his Children, that she may impart

“ Such Things, as ’tis expedient, they shou’d know.

[Exit Servant.

Mean while, O King, suspend the Sepulture

Of *Polyxene*, dear Victim! that one Pile

May mix their kindred Flames, and the same Urn

Contain (the twofold Cause of Grief to me)

My Childrens Ashes buried in the Ground.—

AGAMEMNON.

It shall be so.—Yet cou’d we now set Sail;

It were impossible to grant this Boon.

⁷ The Daughters of *Danaus* Brother to *Egyptus*. It is said there were fifty of them, who all, save *Hypermnestra*, slew their Husbands.

⁸ This Story is variously related, and, as *Erasmus* observes, not worth a curious Enquiry.

But

But since the Gods a favourable Gale
 As yet deny us; we must wait in Hope.—
 May you succeed.—“ For tis desirable;
 “ In publick, and in private Life, by all;
 “ That bad Men suffer, and the Good live happy.

CHORUS.

O my dear Country! O thou *Troy*
 No longer to be rank'd among
 Cities that are impregnable;
 When such a Cloud of hostile *Greeks*
 Surround thee, with
 Their all-destroying Spears!—
 Thy crown-like Tow'rs demolish'd;
 And ruinous Streets emblacken'd all
 With pitchy Smoke; where we, alas!
 Must set our Feet no more.

II.

'Twas in the midst of Night we fell;
 When from the Fumes of Supper, Sleep
 Spread o'er our Eyes his downy Wings;
 The sacred Song, and Sacrifice
 Perform'd; and when
 Our Husband's glitt'ring Spears
 Hung idle in their Chambers;
 Nor did they see, or haply dream,
 The naval Army of the *Greeks*
 Were traversing the Town.

III.

I then was filleting my Hair;
 And, in the reflective Beams
 Of the golden Mirrour
 My Night-Head-dress adjusting,

Ready

Ready to lay me down in Bed :

When through the Streets a Tumult ran,
And this the horrid Cry. —

“ O Sons of *Greece*, when, when shall we,

“ From *Troy* in Ashes laid,

“ Return to our own Home ?

IV.

Then running from my wish'd-for Bed

Naked, save one single Robe,

(Like the *Doric* Maidens⁹),

I straight address'd *Diana*.

But all in vain, alas ! my Pray'r. —

When I had seen my Husband slain,

Hurried was I to Sea

Oft looking back on *Troy*, from whose

Dear Borders as the Ship

Drew off, I fainting fell, —

V.

Pouring out my bitter Curfes

On *Helen*, (Sister of the famous Twins)

And her vile Paramour

Pestiferous *Paris* ; who hath driv'n me,

An Exile from my native Home ;

Not by honourable Marriage,

But hard Calamity,

From some afflicting God. —

O may she ne'er return,

Or with a happy Voyage reach

Her native *Greece* again.

⁹ The *Lacedemonian* Damsels were us'd to dance, in Garments so fine and curiously wrought, that their Bodies might be seen through them, whence they became a Proverb.



A C T V. S C E N E I.

POLYMNESTOR, HECUBA, CHORUS,
Servants, and the two Children of Polymnestor,

POLYMNESTOR.

O Priam, best belov'd of Men wert thou!
 And dearest *Hecuba*, with Tears unfeign'd,
 I mourn thy Misery, thy City laid
 In ruinous Heaps, and thy fair Daughter slain
 A Sacrifice!—There's nothing for frail Man
 To glory, or confide in; nothing sure,
 But that the happiest Man on Earth, to morrow
 May be as wretched.—So the Gods ordain,
 Confounding Joy with Sorrow, Good with Ill;
 That ignorant of Futurity, through Hope,
 Or Fear, we still may worship and adore.—
 But why this bootless Meditation, nought it serves
 To remedy past Ills.—Perhaps, you blame
 My Absence, *Hecuba*;—know, I have been
 Far from the Coast employ'd on State-Affairs;
 But with convenient Speed was hastning hither,
 When I your Servant met; at whose Report,
 Obedient to your Orders, I am come.

H E C U B A.

O *Polymnestor*, much am I asham'd,
 That you should see me in this wretched Plight;
 You, that have seen me in my happier Days:
 Misfortune

Misfortune subjects one to Rashfulness:
Therefore impute it not to Disrespect,
That I don't look on you with pointed Eye.
Besides, you know, by customary Law,
'Tis not for Women, Sir, to stare at Men. —

POLYMNESTOR.
'Tis well; — I wonder not, — but yet the Cause,
Why I am hither call'd, I fain wou'd know.

HECUBA.

It is a private Cause, which much concerns
You, and your Children; therefore from this Tent
Command your Guards and Servants to retire. —

POLYMNESTOR.

Be gone, ye Servants, — All is Safety here,
Where all are Friends; and such is *Hecuba*,
And such the Grecian Army. —

[*Exeunt the Servants of Polymnestor.*]

Now reveal,
Wherein the Happy can his Duty pay
To the Afflicted; you will find me prompt
With Heart, and Hand, to succour your Distress.

HECUBA.

First, lives my Son, my dear-lov'd *Polydore*;
Whom you receiv'd in Guardianship from me,
And from the Hands of *Priam*? answer this
My first Concern; what follows, you shall hear. —

POLYMNESTOR.

If that can make you happy, you are happy. —

HECUBA.

O thou dear Man, how worthy thee thy Words! —

POLYMNESTOR.

Say then what further you wou'd ask of me.

E

HECUBA.

HECUBA.

And is he mindful of his aged Mother?

POLYMNESTOR.

So mindful, he wou'd fain have stoin to see you.

HECUBA.

And is the Gold all safe, he took from Troy?

POLYMNESTOR.

All safe, and guarded by my special Care.

HECUBA.

So guard it; and ne'er covet what's not thine.

POLYMNESTOR.

That I abhor: I love I enjoy my own.

HECUBA.

Know you my Business then with you and yours?

POLYMNESTOR.

I know it not, and therefore wait your Pleasure.

HECUBA.

Love thou my Son, as you are belov'd by me.

POLYMNESTOR.

But what is't you wou'd have my Children know?

HECUBA.

There are vast Hoards of Gold yet left in Troy.

POLYMNESTOR.

And this you wou'd have told to Polydore?

HECUBA.

Yes; and by you, for you are an honest Man.

POLYMNESTOR.

But how does this concern my Children's Presence?

HECUBA.

'Twere fit, they shou'd know this, in case you die.

But her Meaning is; that she loves Him, as much as he loved Polydore.

POLYM-

HECUBA.

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POLYMNESTOR.

Right. To superior Judgment I submit.

HECUBA.

You know, where stood in *Troy* *Minerva's* Shrine?

POLYMNESTOR.

Yes!—is the Treasure there?—But what the Mark?

HECUBA.

A huge black Stone hangs nodding o'er the Place.

POLYMNESTOR.

Is there ought else, you wou'd inform me of?

HECUBA.

Yes; of some Treasures, that I brought away.

POLYMNESTOR.

How hid?—among your Wardrobe?—or where else?

HECUBA.

In yon Pavilion, kept among the Spoils.

POLYMNESTOR.

Do not those Tents belong to *Grecian* Chiefs?

HECUBA.

But our Apartments there are separate.

POLYMNESTOR.

And are at present none but Women there?

And Women to be trusted?—

HECUBA.

————— Be assur'd

That not a *Greek* is there, nor any Soul
Save Women-Captives.—Let us then make haste,
(The *Greeks*, as soon as possible will fail)
That when dispatch'd this Business; you and yours
May, well rewarded, meet my Son again.

[*Exeunt* Hecuba, Polymnestor with his Children.

E 2

SCENE

S C E N E II.

CHORUS.

Yes; soon shall your Reward o'ertake you,
 As when the swimming Mariner
 Drawn sidelong by the forceful Waves
 Into a Whirlpool; there ingulph'd
 Beneath the Billows, sinks
 Never to rise again.——
 A Wretch, like you, obnoxious
 To Justice, and the Gods can ne'er escape
 A dreadful, dreadful Fall.
 In hopes of Gain, thou hast mistook thy Way,
 For one, that leads to Death:—Yet more,
 To punish such a Villain, thou shalt fall
 By the weak Hands of Women.——

[*Exeunt Part of the Chorus.*]

S C E N E III.

SEMICHORUS, POLYMNESTOR,
crying out behind the Scenes.

POLYMNESTOR.

Alas! Wretch that I am! depriv'd of Light!——

SEMICHORUS.

Hear ye, my Friends, the *Thracian's* rueful Cries?

POLYMNESTOR.

Alas! my Children! barbarously slain!——

SEMICHORUS.

Bless me! strange, horrid Deeds are done within.——

POLYMNESTOR.

Swift as ye are, ye never shall escape

My

HECUBA

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My vengeful Ire;—down will I pull these Walls:—

SEMICHORUS.

With threatening Hand he brandishes his Spear.

Shall we rush in? The time invites us now.

To aid our Fellow-Captives, and the Queen.——

S C E N E IV.

Enter Hecuba speaking to Polydore within.

Ay; break away; down with the Doors and Walls:—

In vain you rage;—you never can restore

Sight to those bleeding Orbs, nor ever view

Those hapless Children my Revenge has slain.——

SEMICHORUS.

And is he punish'd? Have you conquer'd then

The impious Wretch, and done the Deeds you say?——

HECUBA.

Soon shall ye see him here before the Doors,

Groping his way with blind unsteady Foot;

While his ill-fated Children, slain by me,

And my assistant *Trojans*, sleep in Death.——

Thus in Revenge I triumph.—But, he comes,

Frantic with Rage and Torture.—I'll retire,

For 'tis in vain with Madmen to contend. *[Exit.]*

S C E N E V.

Enter POLYMNESTOR.

POLYMNESTOR.

Alas! Alas!

Where shall I set my Foot?

Where shall I go? or whither drive?

This way, or that way, shall I crawl

The darksome Ground, with Hands and Feet,
 Like a four-footed Mountain-beast;
 In quest of those fell Homicides,
 Who thus have tortur'd me?—
 Ye wicked, cursed, *Phrygian* Crew,
 Into what Corners are ye fled,
 Sculking from my Revenge?—

O *Phabus*, Ruler of the Day,
 Heal, heal my bleeding sightless Eyes.——

But hark!—I hear the gentle Steps
 Of these vile Woman-slaves.——
 How, rushing on them, shall I tear
 Them Limb from Limb, and gorge myself
 With Garbage, like a Beast of Prey,
 Making a dainty Feast; and thus
 Retaliate their foul Deeds?——

But whither am I going? Shall I leave
 My Babes, to those mad *Bacchanals*,
 Daughters of Hell; who will delight
 To tear them piecemeal, and cast out
 The bloody Banquet to the Dogs?——

I know not where to go; or how to stay;
 But, as a Sea-beat Vessel, driv'n
 By the tempestuous Winds, I now
 Am hurried to the fatal Tent,
 To guard, if possible, the Bodies
 Of my poor murder'd Children.——

S C E N E VI.

The Scene opens, and discovers the Bodies of the Children.

CHORUS.

O Wretch, how dreadful are thy Sufferings!

But

HECUBA

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But thou wert vile; and thus some angry God
With due Reward hath recompens'd thy Crimes.

POLYMNESTOR

Help me, ye *Thracian* Heroes, help,
Take now your Spears, and mount
Your Horses, O ye Sons of *Mars*,
Renown'd for your Exploits in War.—
Help, ye *Atrides*, and ye *Grecian* Chiefs,
To you I cry aloud
By all the Gods above,
To fly, and succour my Distress.—
Will no one hear? Will no one help?
Ah! Why do ye delay?
These cursed Women-slaves
Have quite destroy'd me.
Cruel, most cruel Things I suffer,—
Alas! alas! my Ruin!

Where shall I turn? or whither go?
Shall I ascend the Skies, from whence
Fierce *Sirius*, and *Orion** dart
Their fiery Beams on Earth?
Or shall I sink beneath,
To *Pluto's* dreary Realm,
A wretched Caitiff?—

CHORUS.

In such intolerable Misery,
'Tis pardonable, sure, to wish for Death.

* *Sirius*, the Dog-star.—*Orion*, the Name of a great Astronomer,
who after his Death was translated into Heaven, and made a Con-
stellation.

S C E N E VII.

Enter AGAMEMNON, HECUBA.

AGAMEMNON.

Hearing a strange tumultuous Cry, which Echo,
The babbling guest of Rocks and Hills, hath pour'd
Throughout the Army, hither am I come,
Were we not sure indeed that Troy was falln
By our victorious Arms, this sudden Sound
Had struck a Panick through the Grecian Host.

POLYMNESTOR.

O dearest Agamemnon, (for I hear
Thy well-known Voice) feest thou my Sufferings?—

AGAMEMNON.

Hah!—wretched Polymnestor! who hath done
So villanous a Deed, to tear thine Eyes
Thus from their bleeding Sockets, and to slay
Thy innocent Children? whosoe'er he be,
He must be monstrous in his wrathful Malice.

POLYMNESTOR.

'Twas Hecuba, and her vile captive Crew
That thus have ruin'd, more than ruin'd me.—

AGAMEMNON.

[To Hecuba.]

What say you, Hecuba?—Own you the Fact?
Such wondrous Daring, sure, can ne'er be yours?—

POLYMNESTOR.

Hah!—say you Hecuba?—Is she then here?—
O shew me where, that I may tear her Limbs;
And in her Blood drench my revengeful Hands!—

³ This gives great Offence to the French Critick, but the Rage and Pain, that we suppose Polymnestor in, make it excusable. The Expression is just and tragical.

AGA.

Hold! what do you do?—

POLYMNESTOR.

I pray you, by the Gods,

Permit my furious Hands to seize the Wretch.

AGAMEMNON.

Throw off this barbarous Passion, and declare
The Cause, that having heard both you and her,
I may adjudge the Merit of your Woe.

POLYMNESTOR.

Hear then the Cause, O King:—One *Polydore*,
The youngest Son of *Hecuba*, and *Priam*,
Was sent to *Thrace*, and trusted to my Care,
His Parents fearing *Troy's* approaching Fate.
'Tis true, I slew him.—But the Reason, why
I slew him, you will think, I hope, both wise,
And provident.—I was afraid, O King,
This Foe of yours, surviving, should collect
The scatter'd Forces, and rebuild his *Troy*:
And that the warlike *Greeks* wou'd therefore try
Another Expedition to this Land;
And again ravage this my fertile *Thrace*;
As now we suffer in our Neighbour's Fate:—
But soon as *Hecuba* had heard the Death
Of her Son *Polydore*, by Stratagem
She drew me hither, with a false Pretence
That she wou'd shew me where, among the Ruins,
Vast Hoards of *Trojan* Treasure still lay hid:
And thus, pretending Secrecy, She brought
Me and my Children to this fatal Tent,
Where sitting on the Couch, as with a Friend,
I was surrounded by her Female Train:

Some

Some holding to the Light my *Thracian* Robe,
 With Praise admir'd it; others took my Spear;
 And thus they strip me of each Ornament.—
 Such as were Matrons with pretended Fondness
 Dandled my Children, 'till from Hand to Hand,
 They had remov'd them from their Father's Reach.
 And straight, amid their sweet Careless, drew
 The Poniards, they had hid beneath their Vests,
 And stab'd my innocent Babes; while others bound
 With hostile Violence, my Hands and Feet:
 And as I rais'd myself, if possible
 To help my Children, still they pluck'd me back,
 And held me by the Hair; In vain I strove;
 In vain was all Resistance; thus o'erpow'r'd
 By an enrag'd and cruel Multitude.
 But the Barbarity, that hence ensu'd,
 Exceeds Description.—With their Bodkins arm'd,
 They pierc'd, and digg'd, and scoop'd out both my Eyes,
 And leaving me thus bath'd in my own Gore,
 They fled again—I follow'd close, as when
 With his best speed, the wounded Lion turns
 Upon the Dogs; and every Corner search'd,
 As eager, as the Huntsman after Game;
 Forcing my way, and breaking all before me.—
 Thus having slain thine Enemy, O King,
 For thee I suffer in the Cause of *Greece*.
 But to make short my Speech, I'll only add,
 That all, that ever was, or may be said,
 Sarcastical on Women, is compris'd
 In these few Words----“Nor Earth, nor Sea e'er bred
 “A Monster like to Woman.—This he knows,
 Whoe'er convers'd with the deceitful Sex.—

CHORUS.

CHORUS

Insolent Man, reproach not the whole Sex
For thy Misfortunes: Know that there are Women,
Unworthy some the Name; but some endued
With Qualities, admir'd, belov'd by all.⁴—

HECUBA

O Agamemnon, ever ought the Tongue,
And Deeds of Man to be akin; nor e'er
Shou'd That prevail, but when These correspond.
Good Deeds deserve good Words; but the false Gloss
And paint of Rhetoric, never can set off
Deeds vile, and base; oft tried with vain Attempt
By Men of seeming Wisdom, who at last
Have perish'd in their Folly, none escaping—
This then to you, O King, by way of Proem,
And now to answer this vile *Ibracian*.—

You say, but falsely say, you slew my Son
To gratify the Greeks, and thus their King.—
For was thy *barbarous* Nation e'er a Friend
To Greece? Or can it be? Thou worst of Men!
What Obligations then canst Thou pretend?
Seek'st Thou Alliance, or Relation there?
Or didst Thou fear they would return and spoil
Thy growing Harvest?—Whom can'st Thou persuade
Such idle Stories to believe?—Oh, no:
It was the Gold, if you confess the Truth,
The fordid Hope of Gold that slew my Son.—

⁴ The *French* Critic seems to wonder that the *Chorus* (which consists of Women) should so regard this Rant of a Madman, as to vouchsafe it a serious Answer. But unfavourable as our Poet generally was to the Sex, he could not but think so severe a Sarcastm required some Apology.

⁵ The Poet, as the *French* Critic observes, here alludes to some base Infidelity, which the *barbarous* Nations had been guilty of, when in Alliance with Greece, during the *Peloponnesian* War.

But

But say, why, when *Troy* flourish'd, and her Walls
 And Tow'rs stood firm, and *Hector's* threatening Spear
 Shone in his warlike Hand, and *Priam* liv'd;
 Why, if you ow'd such Favour to the *Greeks*,
 Slew you not *then* my Son? Or why refused
 You *then* to break your Trust, when in your Pow'r,
 And give him up alive to these your Friends?—
 No; but when *Trojan* Grandeur was no more,
 And mounting Flames declar'd the City lost,
 Then slew you *Polydore*, your Guest, your Ward,—

But further to expose your Villany;
 Ought you not, Traitor, if so dear to you
 As you pretend, the *Greeks* then were, to've giv'n
 The Gold (which you confess not yours but his)
 To the distressed Army, waging War
 Long in a foreign Country, far from home?
 No; nor yet darts thy niggard Soul to make
 The grateful Offer, but still perseveres
 To keep the hoarded Treasure safe at home.
 O hadst thou kept my Son as safe, he yet
 Had liv'd; and mighty Honours crown'd thy Name;
 In such a time of Trial, faithful found.

' Prosperity is sure of Friends, but Friends
 ' They are indeed, whom adverse Fortune tries.
 And had you ever wanted Gold, my Son
 Could have supplied that Want if he had liv'd,
 A lasting Treasure, both to you, and yours.
 But he is lost, and with him lost the Friend⁶,
 And Gold you thirsted for; your Children slain,
 And your dear Self in miserable Plight.—

And now, O King, shouldst thou protect this Wretch

⁶ Not *Agamemnon*, as the French Critic takes it, but *Polydore*.

How would it fully royal Dignity?—

'Tis not to gratify the good, the just,

Or virtuous, but an abandon'd Villain;

Which who so gratifies, must be himself—

But pardon me; I slander not the King.

CHORUS.

Ye Gods! how eloquently flows the Tongue,

Pleading the Cause of Virtue, and of Truth.

AGAMEMNON.

'Tis hard to judge of others Sufferings;

But *here* my Duty: This I undertook,

And Honour for impartial Judgment calls.

Know then, O *Polymnestor*, that I ne'er

Can think you murder'd this unhappy Prince,

With View to gratify or me, or *Greece*.

This weak Defence your Sufferings extort.—

You slew him for his Gold, his tempting Gold.—

Perhaps too it may seem to Men of *Thrace*

A trivial Crime, to break the sacred Laws

Of Hospitality, and slay their Guest:

Far other Morals are we taught in *Greece*.

With Justice therefore I cannot acquit thee.

No; as you, willing, dar'd to perpetrate

This horrid Deed; so, willing, or unwilling,

You now must suffer what the Gods inflict.—

POLYMNESTOR.

And must I suffer at the Hands of Slaves,

Baffled, and foil'd by these vile Women-Slaves?

HECUBA.

Most justly, for such unexampled Crimes.

POLYMNESTOR.

Alas! my Children! oh! my bleeding Eyes!

HECUBA.

HECUBA.

What? can you feel? Think then what I have felt
Before, for mine, the murder'd Polydora.

POLYMNESTOR.

And do you triumph, Wretch, o'er these my Pains?

HECUBA.

Why not? I justly triumph in Revenge.

POLYMNESTOR.

But not, perhaps, when the high-furging Waves—

HECUBA.

Shall carry me to the *Palagian* Shore
A Captive?

POLYMNESTOR.

No; for they shall overwhelm you,
Fall'n from the lofty Shrouds into the Deep.

HECUBA.

A Leap indeed! but from what Violence?

POLYMNESTOR.

Yourself shall mount the Sall-Yard—

HECUBA.

How, with Wings?

POLYMNESTOR.

No, but transform'd; a fiery snarling Hound.

HECUBA.

Transform'd? From what blind Scer learn you this?

POLYMNESTOR.

The *Thracian* Prophet *Dionysus* told me.

HECUBA.

And not a Word of what yourself should suffer?

POLYMNESTOR.

No; or I never had been thus ensnar'd.

HECUBA.

Dying, or living, shall I know this Change?

HECUBA.

POLYM-

HECUBA

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POLYMNESTOR.

Dying; and hence shalt signalize thy Tomb.

HECUBA.

What, by my new, or by my human Shape?

POLYMNESTOR.

Call'd *Cynossema*, a Sea-mark shall it stand?

HECUBA.

I care not, since I've satisfy'd Revenge.

POLYMNESTOR.

Yet more; the Prophetess *Cassandra* dies.

HECUBA.

Forbid it, Heav'n! On your own Head that Word.

POLYMNESTOR. [Pointing to Agamemnon.

His Wife, if she deserves that Name, will kill her.

HECUBA.

Sure *Clytemnestra* ne'er can be so cruel.

POLYMNESTOR.

Yes; ev'n to butcher *Agamemnon's* Self.

AGAMEMNON.

What, art thou mad? Wouldst thou increase thy Woes?

POLYMNESTOR.

Ay, kill me, if you please, but know, the Bath,

To wash thy lifeless Limbs, waits thee at home.---

7 The Fable of *Hecuba's* being transform'd into a Bitch arose from the Acerbity and Rage of her Sorrow, which caus'd her to snarl, and curse all she met, especially the *Greeks*. *Hogginus* says, she threw herself overboard. *Codreus*, that *Ulysses* and his Companions, for her bitter and invective Language, stoned her to Death, and then threw her into the Sea near the Promontory *Maronea*, which from hence was called *Cynossema*. *Julius Pollux* conceives this *Kurde σῆμα*, to be rather the Monument of some famous Dog, like that of *Geryon's* Dog in Spain, or those in *Calydon* and *Salamina* belonging to the Dogs of *Atalanta* and *Xanthippus*; and with this Conjecture agrees the excellent Commentator on *Mela*, p. 129. See the Note in an old Translation of the *Troades* of *Seneca*.

* This both in the Greek and Latin Languages was the Form of rejecting and abominating any ominous Speech. See Act 1. Note 12.

AGAMEMNON.

AGAMEMNON

Away with him; my Servants, drag him hence.

POLYMNESTOR.

Have I then stung you?

AGAMEMNON.

Stop the Villain's Mouth.

POLYMNESTOR.

Ay, stop it; I have spoke my all.

AGAMEMNON.

Away;

And straight expose him in some desert Isle;

There let him vent his bold licentious Rage.

[Exeunt Servants with Polymnestor.]

Now, *Hecuba*, prepare the funeral Rites

For both your Children, wretched as thou art!

And haste, ye *Trojan* Captives, to the Tents

Of your new Masters.—A propitious Gale

(Thank Heav'n) invites us to our native *Greece*:

Where may we find our wish'd-for Happiness,

And bury all our Cares in Love and Joy.

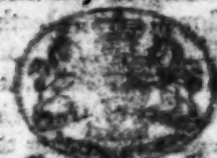
CHORUS.

To the Tents, to the Ships, come, my Friends, let us
haste;

'Tis in vain to repine at the Joys that are past;

Tho' in Slavery we spend the disconsolate Day.

It is Fate that commands us, and we must obey.



F I N I S

MOORE

or.

us